

2006 Strategic Plan



State Of California

Fair Political Practices Commission

Adopted December 1, 2005

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Mission Statement

“The mission of the Fair Political Practices Commission is to promote the integrity of representative state and local government in California through fair, impartial interpretation and enforcement of political campaign, lobbying, and conflict of interest laws.”

To further the principles of democratic, representative government expressed in the Political Reform Act, the members and employees of the FPPC commit to:

- Vigorously, fairly, and uniformly administer and enforce the Political Reform Act of 1974, as amended, in an impartial manner, free of bias
- Clarify the law with sound, consistent advice
- Develop clear, consistent, and understandable regulations, forms, and instruction manuals
- Educate candidates, public officials, and the public about their role in protecting the integrity of our political system, our responsibilities to the citizenry, and the public's right to full disclosure
- Encourage and empower citizens to participate in the political process
- Maintain public trust by providing leadership and the highest ethical standards
- Serve the needs of the People by diligently pursuing innovative and responsive services
- Aggressively investigate and prosecute violations through reactive and proactive programs to ensure compliance with the law

Agency Description

The Fair Political Practices Commission has primary responsibility for the impartial administration, implementation and enforcement of the California Political Reform Act of 1974, as amended by legislative and initiative enactments.

The purposes of the Political Reform Act of 1974 (Act) are to:

1. Ensure that election campaign contribution and expenditure data is fully, accurately and timely disclosed so that the voters may be fully informed and to inhibit improper financial practices;
2. Regulate the activities of lobbyists and disclose their finances to prevent any improper influencing of public officials;
3. Provide for the disclosure of assets and income of public officials that may affect their official actions to avoid any conflicts-of-interest;
4. Ensure that the state ballot pamphlet contains useful and adequate information so that the voters will not be entirely dependent upon paid advertising for information concerning state measures;
5. Eliminate laws and practices that unfairly favor incumbents to provide for fair elections; and
6. Provide adequate mechanisms to public officials and to private citizens to ensure vigorous enforcement of the law.

To meet its responsibilities under the Act, the Commission adopts and amends regulations. It also develops required forms, prepares manuals and instructions, provides written and oral advice, aids agencies and public officials with record keeping and reporting, and maintains a central file of economic interest statements for certain state and local officials. The Commission also investigates possible violations of the Act, imposes sanctions against violators, and assists state and local agencies in the development and enforcement of conflict-of-interest codes.

The Commission's staff is organized into five divisions: enforcement, legal, technical assistance, administration, and executive. The enforcement division investigates and prosecutes administratively violations of the Act. The legal division interprets the Act by developing regulations and giving advice on specific sections of the Act. It also represents the Commission in litigation. The technical assistance division trains and assists those governed by the Act and maintains the central file of economic interest statements for public officials required to file with the Commission. The Commission's budget, business services, data processing, and personnel functions are directed by the administration division. Finally, the executive division is comprised of the Chairman, who serves as the senior manager of the organization; the Executive Director, who also serves as senior administrator, the Legislative Coordinator; the Information Officer, who also serves as the Publications Editor; and the Assistant to the Chairman, who serves as Commission Secretary.

The Commission Chairman is appointed to a single four-year term by the Governor, and the Executive Director serves at the pleasure of the Commission. The Commission is composed of four commissioners in addition to the Chairman, each of whom serve single four year terms upon respective appointment by the Attorney General, Controller, Secretary of State, and the Governor. The additional Governor's appointee must be from the same political party. The Chairman serves full time, and receives a salary equivalent to that of the President of the Public Utilities Commission. The other commissioners receive a per diem payment and expense reimbursement.

FPPC Principles

The FPPC Principles are stated in the form of maxims that are used by FPPC members and employees as guideposts to their conduct. Using our “intranet,” employees at all levels of the organization are encouraged to exchange views on the meaning, application, and reality of these precepts. They are more than mere positive rhetoric.

Integrity

In all endeavors, act in an ethical, honest, and professional manner.

Quality

Challenge the established way. Strive to meet internal and external customer’s needs through innovation, competence, and teamwork. Seek to “do it right” the first time.

Respect

Sensitivity to the needs of others, both within and outside the organization.
Demonstrate courteous, considerate, responsive, and professional behavior.

Openness

Willing to listen to and share information with others.
Receptive to new ideas. Trusting of motivations.

Accountability

Encourage leadership. Take ownership and responsibility for actions and their results.
Accept both risks and rewards, trusting that good faith risks will not be punished.

Vision Statement

“To be the government agency trusted by the Electorate to sensibly, impartially, interpret and enforce the laws governing the influence of money on the conduct of public officials.”

Goals and Objectives 2006-2010

Goals

- A. Improve productivity and efficiency throughout the agency.
- B. Improve recruitment and retention of employees throughout the agency.
- C. Secure sufficient funding, and a consistent funding source, to meet workload needs.
- D. Seek amendments to the Political Reform Act that aid compliance and workload management.

Objectives

Goal A: Improve productivity and efficiency throughout the agency.

- 1. Reduce time-to-closure of enforcement complaints.
 - a. Establish criteria to avoid opening cases we lack the resources to fully prosecute, particularly those involving a low factor of public harm.
 - b. Consider diversion program in lieu of full investigation/fine for lower-level violations: courses to be provided by Technical Assistance Division for a fee paid by respondent.
 - c. Assign simple reporting and low-public-harm violations to investigators or Political Reform Consultants for resolution where appropriate.
 - d. Establish “timely hearing” guidelines, providing milestones each case should reach by a given point in time, with exceptions for more complex complaints.
 - e. Look for outreach opportunities, through the California District Attorneys Association and others, to educate local prosecutors on prosecuting Political Reform Act violations.

2. Reduce time-to-closure of requests for written advice.
 - a. Post advice letters on website.
 - b. Provide enhanced searches of advice letters on website.
 - c. Issue informal advice whenever appropriate.
 - d. Establish procedures for timely triage of advice requests, including early communication with requester if more information is needed, tracking of those communications, and closure of request where additional information is not provided in a timely manner.
3. Reduce wait time for callers to our toll-free advice line, 1-866-ASK-FPPC.
 - a. Improve call tracking software to determine wait time, etc.
 - b. Increase the total number of Political Reform Consultants; increase number of Political Reform Consultants available for telephone assistance around filing deadlines and late reporting periods.
 - c. Use email for simple requests for statutes, regulations, and advice letters.
4. Increase education and compliance efforts.
 - a. Increase the number of filing officer outreach positions.
 - b. Create website section offering expanded PowerPoint training presentations tailored to specific groups of officials, filers, etc.
5. Implement more accurate and detailed time accounting system.
 - a. Available to all employees, and must track time by function, including section, regulation, litigation, etc.
 - b. Ensure that system is convenient for employees to log their work with a minimum of time and effort.

Goal B: Improve recruitment and retention of employees throughout the agency.

1. Ensure pay equity for all classifications, and in particular Accounting Specialists relative to their counterparts at the Franchise Tax Board.
2. Obtain Department of Personnel Administration approval for Attorney IV classifications in order to lift ratio of Counsel to Senior Counsel classifications and to provide full management/supervision authority over Senior Counsel positions.
3. Address inequity of supervising investigators not receiving the enhanced retirement benefits that line investigators receive.
4. Provide appropriate training opportunities for all classifications.
5. Improve promotional opportunities for all classifications.
6. Ensure annual evaluations of all employees, with an Individual Development Plan component included for each, to foster employee improvement and job satisfaction.

Goal C: Secure sufficient funding, and a consistent funding source, to meet workload needs.

1. Obtain a 50% increase in funding in order to meet workload.
2. Develop component of annual report that documents workload and funding levels, and provide that information to the Legislature and Department of Finance.
3. Make all funding statutory to ensure adequate support for required workload.
4. Obtain additional positions in all divisions to meet workload.

Goal D: Seek amendments to the Political Reform Act that aid compliance and management.

1. Sponsor legislation to increase major donor threshold in light of Prop. 34 limits and to reduce workload

2. Eliminate paper reports for electronic filers of campaign statements once an adequate electronic filing system is available.
3. Pursue a comprehensive state and local electronic filing system for campaign disclosure.

Appendices

I – Organization Chart

II – 2004 Annual Report